

FLEET Focus

Tip of the spear: Pacific submarines move west



File photo

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By COMSUBPAC Public Affairs

The Navy will homeport as many as three attack submarines on Guam, the first to arrive in fiscal year 2002. The two other submarines would arrive by fiscal year 2004. The submarines will report to Commander, Submarine Squadron 15, also located on Guam. "This is a significant step for our Submarine Force," said Rear Adm. Al Konetzni Jr., Commander Submarine Force Pacific Fleet (COMSUBPAC). "It will relieve some of the stress currently placed on attack boats that are continuing to meet increased tasking with fewer assets," he said. Guam's Central Pacific location offers significant savings in both time and distance for submarines. The move was made because there are more critical missions than there are attack submarines. Since the end of the Cold War, the Pacific Submarine Force has shrunk from a high of 40 attack submarines in 1989 to 27 in 2000, while the number of critical taskings has continued to increase. Pacific Submarine Force deployed OPTEM-PO (percent of time submarines spend out of port) has increased from an average of 67 per-

cent in 1995 to 78 percent in 1999. "Logistically and economically, this was the right thing to do," said Konetzni. "We are still trying to perform our mission to the best of our ability, albeit fewer resources. This will certainly squeeze more efficiency out of a smaller force," the Adm. added. Three attack submarines homeported in Guam will provide an additional two months of operations per year for each submarine, plus the clear advantage of crisis response and engagement that can be provided from the ships' permanent presence in the western Pacific theater. Submariners fortunate enough to be assigned to one of these submarines have the added benefits of serving in a forward-deployed location: increased mission opportunities and unparalleled port call possibilities. "Men serving on these boats can count on the 'meat and potatoes' of an operational schedule and more frequent, quality port visits," he said. While this action won't satisfy all the demands of theater commanders for the unique and critical capabilities of attack submarines, it will serve to further enhance their effective employment. More information can be found at <http://www.csp.navy.mil>.

HSL-37 Detachment Three Jesters return from WESTPAC

By Lt. j.g. Andy Byers
HSL-37 Public Affairs

HSL-37 Detachment Three 'Jesters' are scheduled to return tomorrow to their home base at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. The Jesters left last August attached to the USS Crommelin (FFG 37) for a Western Pacific deployment which brought the Det of six pilots, three air crewmen, and fourteen aircraft maintainers to the Arabian Gulf and back. The Jesters wasted little time and quickly established themselves as leaders in the air by flying more than 700 hours, 55 percent of that at night. The Detachment spent the majority of their time underway keeping its two SH-60B Seahawk helicopters in the air in support of Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) enforcing United Nations trade sanctions against Iraq. This required the ship and helicopter crews to station themselves in the northern most portions of the Arabian Gulf, an extremely volatile region. The Jesters spent more than 100 days underway in the Arabian Gulf alone including one demanding 62 consecutive day period. Crommelin's Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) team with the support of the Jester aircraft participated in 15 non-compliant boardings of suspected sanctions violators, setting a new record for the region. A vessel is considered non-compliant when they fail to conform to the inspection process

issued by the United Nations Security Council. The greater part of these boardings were accomplished late at night with little or no moon illumination. The aircrews flew with the assistance of night vision goggles and forward looking infrared (FLIR) technology which allowed the LAMPS (Light Airborne Multipurpose System) helicopter and ship team to own the night and defeat any would be smugglers. The Jester's mission and success would not have been possible without the unequaled effort of their helicopter maintainers. A typical LAMPS detachment brings with it on deployment only the bare minimum of personnel required to keep the two helicopters flying. Working with the bare minimum of resources the Jesters logged almost 10,000 maintenance hours performing 5 major phase inspections while maintaining the highest of mission accomplishment percentages. Because of the maintenance effort the Detachment established itself as the standby, go to, helicopter detachment for the Battle Group. Crommelin departed the Arabian Gulf in early January in route to Australia for some much needed and much deserved liberty. The ship made port calls to the cities of Darwin, Cairns, and Brisbane before turning north and heading back to Pearl Harbor. With the help of an additional Seahawk from Kaneohe and one SH-3 Sea King from the Pacific Missile Range Facility the entire



Lt. j.g. Andy Byers photo

The HSL-37 Detachment Three 'Jesters' aboard the USS Crommelin (FFG 37) are expected to return home to Pearl Harbor tomorrow from a deployment in the Arabian Gulf.

Detachment will depart the Crommelin just prior to its entry to Pearl Harbor. The Jesters will meet up with their "little sister" Detachment; the War Dawgs who de-

ployed on the USS Fletcher (DD 992) and return to family, friends and squadron mates on the morning of the 17th.

Frank Cable, Honolulu Sailors get prime liberty in Hong Kong

By J01(SW) Tim Paynter
USS Frank Cable Public Affairs

If you've ever talked to a Sailor that has visited the dragon city of Hong Kong, you'll most likely hear phrases similar to, "The best liberty port during our cruise," and "A harbor you'll remember for the rest of you're life." USS Frank Cable (AS 40) and USS Honolulu (SSN 718) Sailors had a chance to experience first hand one of Asia's largest metropolises during a Jan. 18-23 port visit. "Hong Kong was bigger than I thought it would be," said Cable

crewmember, Seaman Apprentice Nicole Wise of Pensacola, Fla. "Most of the people spoke English and I was totally impressed by the entire city," she said. A five-day maintenance period alongside a submarine tender while in Hong Kong also offered submariners on board Honolulu a chance to unwind, while receiving top-notch repairs from the countless craftsman on board Frank Cable. "Thanks to Frank Cable's complete support across the board, my Sailors had a chance to relax and enjoy the culture, sightseeing and great shopping that Hong Kong has

to offer," said Cmdr. John Richardson, Honolulu's commanding officer. Through the eyes of one of the Navy's more junior Sailors, this was an experience of a lifetime. "This has been great!" exclaimed Seaman Apprentice Tony Odom while standing topside on board Honolulu. Odom has been in the Navy nine months — most of spent on the current Western Pacific deployment. "I expected the culture here to be a lot like Singapore, but it wasn't as strict," the Manchester, Tenn. native explained. "I don't know which I like more,

Singapore or Hong Kong. Both have been great, and I've spent most of my time sightseeing and shopping." Joining the Cable and Honolulu crews was the USS Tarawa (LHA 1) Amphibious Ready Group with the Marine Expeditionary Unit embarked, which brought the count of U.S. service men and women visiting Hong Kong up to an estimated 7,000. "This was a very unique opportunity for our more junior submarine Sailors to see a variety of surface ships," said Chief Yeoman (SS) Alphonso Braggs, Honolulu's ad-

ministrative officer. "Guys like young Odom here have never seen a real ship's store, post office or even a barber shop. Them being able to walk right up the brow and onto the Cable really opened their eyes to what the surface Navy is like. They need that kind of exposure to be a well-rounded Sailor," Braggs said. Throughout the Western Pacific, several ports come to mind when Sailors think about liberty call. And how does Hong Kong rank? Wise said it's definitely at the top of her list. "It's a real toss up, but I think that next to Australia, there's nothing better than Hong Kong!"



Bravo Zulu

New Surface Warriors Onboard USS Russell

Cmdr. R.W. Winsor, Jr., Captain of USS Russell, had the pleasure of pinning on the warfare devices of two new Surface warriors Feb. 1. Earlier in the day, Russell's Information Systems Officer, Ens. Pat Sutton, and the ship's Strike Officer, Lt. j.g. Frank Maldonado successfully completed a rigorous qualification board covering a wide range of warfare designation topics from engineering equipment and advanced damage control to communications systems and submarine warfare. At the pinning ceremony, held in Russell's Wardroom, both recipients thanked various members of the crew, both officer and enlisted, for helping prepare them for their examination board. In addition, Winsor awarded warfare devices to Operations Specialist 2nd Class (SW) Michael Hampton, Signalman 2nd Class (SW) Lamont Watkins and Boatswain Mate 2nd Class (SW) Kaius Achen in a ceremony held on Russell's Messdecks.

Asheville's mess brings home Ney award

By J02 Cori Rhea
COMSUBPAC Public Affairs

The Capt. Edward F. Ney Memorial Award is presented every year to the most deserving general mess in the Navy to recognize outstanding food service onboard Navy vessels. For the second consecutive year, the attack submarine USS Asheville (SSN 758), stationed in Pearl Harbor won the silver medal for the Capt. Edward F. Ney Award. Asheville's Mess, the Subrock Café, keeps the crew satisfied and is rated one of the best places to eat in the Pacific Ocean. Mess Specialist 1st Class (SS) Robert Irish is the leading Mess Specialist on the Asheville and is very serious about his job and proud of the work his crew has been doing. "We have always leaned towards the gourmet side of food rather than the institutional side of cooking. Our work ethic is work hard and be proud of what you do and

it will reflect in your food. Always smile... dedication and hard work always pay off," said Irish. Asheville is the 47th Los Angeles Class Attack submarine and was commissioned on Sept. 28, 1991. Named after the city of Asheville, N.C., the submarine is capable of operating freely in any of the world's oceans, and carries a crew of 120 men. The blue crew onboard the ballistic missile submarine USS Ohio (SSBN 726) won first place for the afloat galley winners in the Pacific Fleet this year. The 560 foot long boat is homeported in Bangor, Wash., and carries two separate crews of 160 men each. Placement as a first place or runner up is a significant credit to food service professionals. The general messes will be recognized at the Joint Military Food Service Excellence Awards ceremony in Anaheim, Calif. in March.

